

Website alert

Our [service centres](#) are open and following public health guidelines at all traffic light settings. You can also contact us by [phone](#) or use [MyMSD](#).

[Dismiss](#)

WORK AND INCOME

TE HIRANGA TANGATA

Printed from: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/complaints/index.html>

Printed: 23 December 2021

Making a complaint

We're committed to service excellence. If we're not meeting this standard please tell us so we can do something about it. Then we'll do our best to make sure it doesn't happen again.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction. It can be about service, location, a practice or process.

You have the right to have your say and for the matter to be looked into.

We take all complaints seriously and aim to learn from them. We'll also try to make sure the same thing doesn't happen again.

[Close all sections](#)

When you can complain

If you're unhappy or not satisfied with our service, eg:

- how staff responded to you in person or on the phone
- not being kept informed
- waiting times to be seen
- payment issues.

How to make a complaint

You can make the complaint yourself or you can get a support person such as a family member, friend or social worker to make a complaint on your behalf.

There are several ways you can do this:

1. [Submit your complaint online](#) ^(Link 1)
 - [call us](#) ^(Link 2) and make a complaint over the phone - you can find the phone number on the letter we sent you about the decision we've made, or you can call [0800 559 009](#) ^(Link 3)
 - make an appointment to talk to us in person. [Find your nearest service centre.](#) ^(Link 4)
 - write to us:
Ministry of Social Development

PO Box 1556
Wellington

2. Help us identify you and the nature of your complaint

So we can follow-up your complaint, make sure you tell us:

- your name
- your address and contact phone number
- your client number
- details of what your complaint is about
- how you would like us to resolve the complaint, eg being heard, being given an apology or a guarantee of better treatment in future.

If you'd like to remain anonymous we'll still act on the information you give us.

3. Our follow-up

We'll look into your complaint immediately to see what went wrong and how this can be put right.

We'll acknowledge your complaint by phone or email and also let you know what we'll do to resolve it.

If we need to work with others to resolve your complaint this may take time.

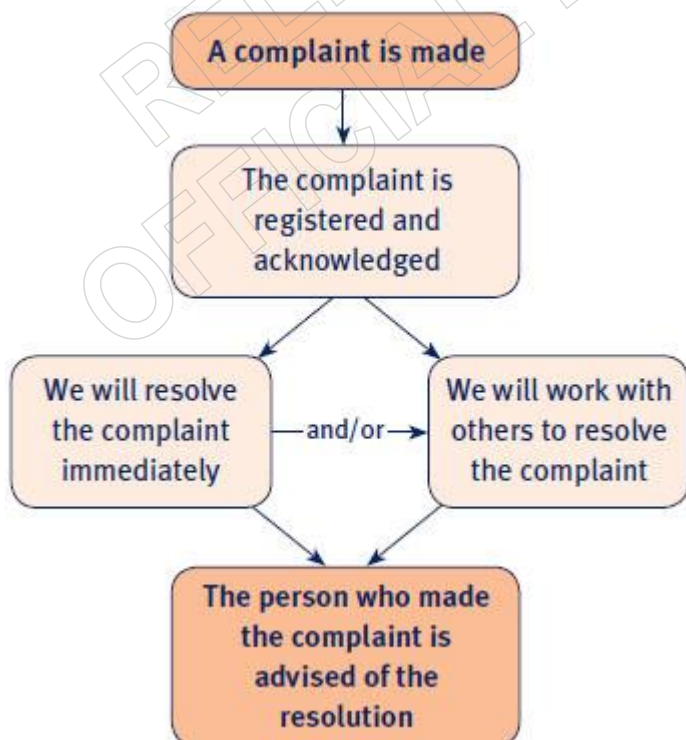
How long will it take?

We do our best to resolve complaints immediately.

If your complaint is unique and complex and we need to work with others to resolve it, it will take longer.

How do we investigate complaints?

This diagram shows you the process we follow when we receive a complaint.



If you're not happy with the outcome

We hope we can resolve your complaint, but if you're still not satisfied you can take the matter to:

[your local Member of Parliament \(MP\)](#) ^(Link 5)

[the Ombudsman](#) ^(Link 6)

[the Privacy Commissioner \(for privacy concerns\)](#) ^(Link 7)

Formal reviews

[Talk to us first](#) ^(Link 8). We'll be able to explain why we've made this decision and put things right if there's been a mistake. If you still don't agree with our decision, you have the option of applying for a formal review.

This could be a:

- Review of decision or
- Review of a medical decision.

It depends on what the decision is about.

Review of a decision

If you still don't understand or agree with a decision we've made, eg this may relate to:

- whether or not you're entitled to a benefit or grant
- the amount you'll receive
- what you must do (obligations) to get a benefit or grant.

You can apply for a formal review of the decision. This needs to be made in writing.

[Review of a decision](#) ^(Link 9)

Review of a medical decision

If you still disagree with a decision made on medical grounds, eg your eligibility for a benefit based on your health condition or your capacity to work, there's a different process.

[Review of a medical decision](#) ^(Link 10)

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1. <https://workandincome.govt.nz/form/workandincome/govt/nz/form.req2?requestType=workandincome-govt-nz-complaints-form>
2. <http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/contact-us/phone-numbers.html#general-enquiries>
3. tel:0800559009
4. <http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/contact-us/find-a-service-centre/>
5. <http://www.parliament.nz/en-nz/mpp/mps/current>
6. <http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz>
7. <https://www.privacy.org.nz/>
8. <http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/contact-us/phone-numbers.html#general-enquiries>
9. <http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/complaints/review-of-decisions.html>
10. <http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/complaints/review-of-a-medical-decision.html>

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How to make a complaint

On this page

What should you do first?

What the Ombudsman can do

What happens when you make a complaint

Tips on making your complaint to the Ombudsman

What you need to know



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What should you do first?

Before coming to the Ombudsman you should try to resolve the issue with the public sector agency itself.

Many agencies have a complaints process. If they don't, write to the head of the agency, such as the chief executive or chairperson.

The Ombudsman may decide not to investigate unless you've tried to do this first.

[Tips for resolving a complaint with a government agency \(/what-ombudsman-can-help/complaints-about-government-agencies/tips-resolving-complaint-government\)](#)

What the Ombudsman can do

Summary

Each year the Office of the Ombudsman receives thousands of complaints from people who feel they have been treated unfairly by a government agency.

We have oversight over nearly 4,000 public sector agencies including councils and school boards of trustees.

My Office is fair, independent and free to use.

We investigate government agencies including cases where you've asked for official information from them and you're unhappy with their response.

We also receive protected disclosures about serious wrongdoing in the workplace.

We monitor places of detention and make sure disabled people are treated fairly. The Chief Ombudsman is assisted by more than a hundred staff dedicated to resolving complaints and dealing with other problems and issues.

My promise is that when we receive a complaint we'll try to resolve it quickly but informally where we can. If the issue is complex, I'll launch an investigation and assign a specialist investigator to your case. I can't necessarily guarantee the outcome that you want, but I do guarantee it will be investigated thoroughly and fairly.

The Ombudsman also investigates wider administrative issues in the public sector.

An individual complaint may trigger a wider investigation. My office is also looking for patterns of complaint and whether there are broader problems within the structure of an organisation. I'm constantly looking for ways we can prevent issues from arising in the future.

In 1962 New Zealand became the fourth country in the world to create an Ombudsman's office.

Today the Office is part of a network of more than 150 Ombudsmen around the world.

Check out our website for more detail about us and how we can help you.

You can make a complaint online, or by emailing or posting it to us.

[Get help \(for the public\) \(/get-help-public\)](#)

Email: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz (<mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz>)

Post: The Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143

If you need help, phone us on 0800 802 602.

What happens when you make a complaint

Summary

When you make a complaint to the Ombudsman, it goes through a number of stages.

This is to make sure we have all the information we need to reach a fair outcome.

When you complain to the Ombudsman, his investigators will let you know they've received it.

They take a close look at your complaint to see if the Ombudsman can help.

If the Ombudsman can't help, they will let you know if there is other action you can take.

If the Ombudsman can help, the investigators will talk to you and the people in the agency concerned and try to sort it out informally.

If your complaint can't be resolved and the Ombudsman decides to look into it further, he starts a formal investigation into your complaint.

If the Ombudsman decides to do a formal investigation, he will tell you and the agency involved.

His investigators will make sure they have all the relevant information from you and the agency involved.

The Ombudsman will form an initial view on your complaint.

This is called a 'provisional opinion'.

The Ombudsman can check at this stage if he has missed anything important.

Before reaching a final opinion, the Ombudsman will carefully consider what those affected have to say.

Then he'll give his final opinion on your complaint.

This may include recommendations to address the issue you have raised.

The Chief Ombudsman works to resolve complaints as soon as he can.

Some complex cases though may take more time.

The Chief Ombudsman's target is to complete 70% of complaints within three months, 80% within six months and 95% within a year.

Tips on making your complaint to the Ombudsman

Summary.

First, try to sort out your problem with the agency you are having a problem with.

They should have a complaints process on their website which tells you the right way to make a complaint. Find out what their complaints process is and follow the steps.

If the agency does not have a complaints process, write a letter or an email to the head of the agency. Tell them why you are unhappy.

If you cannot sort out your problem with the agency, you can make a complaint to the Ombudsman.

You can do this by:

- sending us an email
- filling out the form on our website
- writing a letter to us.

Tips for making your complaint

Make your complaint as soon as you can. It makes it hard for us to look at your complaint if it is about something that happened more than a year ago. Call us if you want to talk it through with us first before making your complaint in writing.

Tell us:

- what happened to make you unhappy
- why you think it is unfair
- what the agency has said about your complaint.

Only give us information about your complaint.

Show us:

- documents about your complaint
- anything else you think we need to see about your complaint.

Don't give us extra information that is not about your complaint, as we can't use that.

Tell us what you would like to happen to fix your complaint.

You can find more information at **ombudsman.parliament.nz**.

What you need to know

- Don't delay. It may be hard for the Ombudsman to investigate a complaint about something that happened more than 12 months ago.
- Describe the decision or action you want to complain about, and explain why you think it was unfair.
- Be clear and concise. Stick to the main facts at the heart of your complaint, and don't add too much detail unless it's necessary.
- Provide letters, documents or other evidence that show you've already tried to sort out the issue with the agency.
- Explain the outcome you want.

[Make a complaint online \(/get-help-public\)](#)

[Complain for someone else \(/what-ombudsman-can-help/complaints-about-government-agencies/complain-someone-else\)](#)

[How the Ombudsman looks at complaints \(/what-ombudsman-can-help/complaints-about-government-agencies/how-ombudsman-works\)](#)

Last updated: Wed 20 Oct 2021

Ombudsman

Fairness for all

Tips for resolving a complaint with a government agency

Give yourself the best chance of directly resolving your complaint with these tips.

On this page

Focus on the main problem

When to write and when to phone

What to include in your complaint

Tell them what you want to happen

Keep records

Be persistent



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Focus on the main problem

Take some time to identify the issue that you want to complain about and what should be done to fix it.

When to write and when to phone

It's best to put your complaint in writing, especially if your complaint is complicated or you are dealing with a large agency.

You can phone the agency first to clarify issues, learn more about their complaint procedures or identify the correct person to write to. It might be possible to resolve your complaint over the phone.

If you decide to phone first, ask to speak to the person who deals with your type of complaint. Tell them your complaint, and ask them if they can help and what they intend to do. Make a note of who you spoke to, when you spoke to them, and what was said.

If you're unsure whether they understood your complaint or you're not satisfied with the response you received, put your complaint in writing. Even if you are satisfied, you should confirm what was said in writing. Keep copies of your correspondence.

If you find it difficult to put your concerns in writing, ask a friend, relative or volunteer at your local Citizens Advice Bureau to help you.

What to include in your complaint

Address your email or letter to the person who is responsible for dealing with your type of complaint, if there is one. If you don't know who that is, write to the head of the agency, such as the chief executive or chairperson.

Set out your complaint as clearly and briefly as possible. Stick to the main points and don't go into too much detail. Include:

- your name and contact details
- relevant dates, places and times
- a description of the problem, incident or decision at issue
- details of any phone conversations, meetings or other steps you've taken to try and sort out the problem
- any other information you think is important
- any relevant documents.

Tell them what you want to happen

TELL THEM WHAT YOU WANT TO HAPPEN

Having explained the problem, tell the agency what action you think should be taken to resolve it and explain that you are giving them a chance to fix it. Make sure what you're asking for is reasonable. If your request is realistic, you are more likely to get what you ask for.

Ask for your complaint to be acknowledged in writing and for the agency to give you an estimate of how long it will take to deal with your complaint. If there is any urgency, let the agency know and explain why.

Keep records

Keep copies of all correspondence you send and receive, and any other important documents or notes, such as details of phone calls. This will be helpful if you need to make a complaint to the Ombudsman or another external complaints body.

Be persistent

If nothing happens, phone the agency to check on the progress of your complaint. If there has been no progress, write to the agency again. If you are unable to sort the problem out after making a reasonable effort to do so, contact the Ombudsman.

[How the Ombudsman looks at complaints \(/what-ombudsman-can-help/complaints-about-government-agencies/how-ombudsman-works\)](#)

[How to make a complaint \(/what-ombudsman-can-help/complaints-about-government-agencies/how-make-complaint\)](#)

[What happens when you make your complaint to the Ombudsman? \(/what-ombudsman-can-help/complaints-about-government-agencies/complaints-process\)](#)

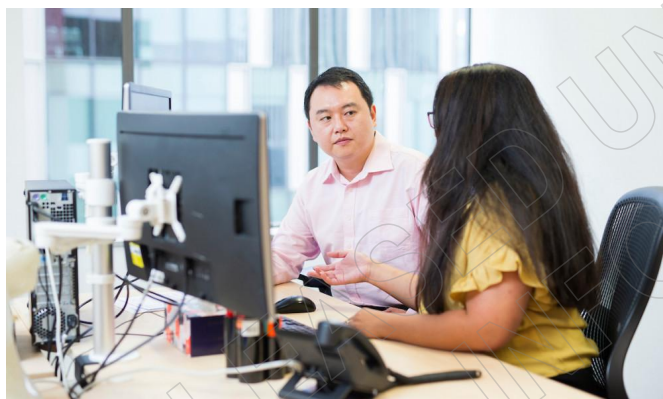
Last updated: Wed 20 Feb 2019

The complaints process

On this page

When you send in your complaint

After the investigation



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When you send in your complaint

You'll receive acknowledgment of receipt and be kept informed throughout the complaint handling process.

When your complaint is received the Ombudsman will decide whether it can be investigated.

If it can't be, you will be told why and directed to other options or agencies who can help.

The Ombudsman can resolve many complaints by talking to you and the agency you have made a complaint about. If they can resolve your complaint, an investigation may not be necessary.

If your complaint is investigated, the Ombudsman will find out all the relevant information needed to consider your complaint.

After the investigation

After investigating a complaint the Ombudsman can form an opinion on whether the agency acted unreasonably or unfairly.

If they think the agency acted reasonably and fairly, you'll have an opportunity to comment.

If they think the agency acted unreasonably or unfairly, they can recommend a solution.

The Ombudsman may publish information about the outcome of a complaint, if it's important for other people to know about. Your privacy will be protected where necessary.

[How the Ombudsman works \(/what-ombudsman-can-help/complaints-about-government-agencies/how-ombudsman-works\)](#)

[How to make a complaint \(/what-ombudsman-can-help/complaints-about-government-agencies/how-make-complaint\)](#)

[Tips for resolving a complaint with a government agency \(/what-ombudsman-can-help/complaints-about-government-agencies/tips-resolving-complaint-government\)](#)

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Complain for someone else

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Getting permission

Anyone can be a representative, including whānau, a support person or a friend.

If you want someone to make a complaint for you – or you want to represent someone – you will need to provide a document with the following text:

I agree that [name of representative] can act for me in a complaint against [the organisation], and provide and receive information about the complaint.

[Name and address of the person the complaint is about]

[Signature of the person the complaint is about]

You can use your own document, write these words and send us a photo or use the template at the bottom of this page.

Sending authorisation

You can upload the authorisation document when you make a complaint on this website, email it or post it.

If you've already sent your complaint and have a reference number, please add that.

[How to make a complaint \(/what-ombudsman-can-help/complaints-about-government-agencies/how-make-complaint\)](/what-ombudsman-can-help/complaints-about-government-agencies/how-make-complaint)

Email: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

Post: PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143

Removing authorisation

If the person with the complaint doesn't want a representative anymore, they can remove the authorisation at any time.

Either of you can phone, email, or send a letter saying so.

Related content

Last updated: Tue 15 Sep 2020

- i** Kia ora, our office and call centre will be closed for the Christmas break from 24 December to 10 Januray. Ngā mihi o te Kirihimete ki a koutou!

[Ask](#)

Your rights

Before you make a complaint

If a business or organisation doesn't handle your personal information properly and you think they have interfered with your privacy, you may be able to make a complaint to us.

Before making a complaint, you should familiarise yourself with some basic privacy knowledge:

- [What to do if you have a privacy issue](#)
- [Steps to take if you can't resolve your issue](#)
- [Our complaints process](#)
- You may be able to resolve your issue without making a complaint. [Find the answers to your privacy questions on our AskUs knowledge base.](#)

Contact the business or organisation directly first

Before you can complain to our office, you need to contact the business or organisation directly to try and work things out. Most businesses and organisations will want to help you resolve your issue quickly, before it comes to our office.



You need to make reasonable efforts to resolve your complaint directly with the business or organisation concerned before you can make a complaint to our office.

You can use our tool to lodge a complaint directly with the business or organisation concerned.

[Submit a complaint directly to a business or organisation](#)

Make a complaint to the Privacy Commissioner

If you have made reasonable efforts to resolve your complaint directly with a business or organisation and you are still not satisfied, you may be able to make a complaint to our office.

What we can't do

We **can't** force organisations to pay you money, issue fines, force either party to accept a settlement offer, or force anyone to accept our findings. Our role is to determine if there has

been a breach of the Privacy Act and to facilitate a resolution between the parties.

Giving someone authority to act on your behalf

If you want someone to act on your behalf (like an advocate, a family member, or lawyer) you will need to complete a Representative Authority Form. The form is available in [Word \(DOCX 82 KB\)](#) or [PDF \(111 KB\)](#) format.

Accessibility

We aim to ensure people we engage with are treated fairly, whatever their background or circumstances. We will endeavour to accommodate any accessibility needs you may have to the best of our ability in accordance with the [Human Rights Act 1993](#).

If you have a preferred communication method, please contact us and let us know what we can do to help: [contact the Office of the Privacy Commissioner](#).

Courtesy and consideration

You can expect us to treat you courteously and with respect.

We expect you to:

- treat us with courtesy
- co-operate with our process and requests for information
- accept that we will not tolerate rude or abusive behaviour.
- understand that we have a zero tolerance approach to threats made to OPC staff.

OPC has a duty to ensure the health and safety of staff and we take the safety of our staff seriously. Violence or threats of violence are never acceptable and we will respond accordingly. This may include issuing a warning, reporting a matter of concern to the Police, or issuing a trespass notice to limit entry onto OPC premises. Our policy for responding to threats to staff safety is available [here](#).

[Proceed to our online complaint form](#) 

i Kia ora, our office and call centre will be closed for the Christmas break from 24 December to 10 Januray. Ngā mihi o te Kirihimete ki a koutou!

[Ask](#)

About us

Contact us

If you are an organisation or business - report privacy breaches via [NotifyUs](#)

NotifyUs helps organisations and businesses work out if their privacy breaches are notifiable and [report them to us](#).

If you are an individual - report privacy complaints via [our complaints page](#)

Our complaints page is for individuals to complain about privacy breaches involving their own or other people's personal information.

General enquiries

If you have a question about privacy, try using our AskUs knowledge base:

[Search AskUs](#)

If you don't find an answer to your question, send us your enquiry using our online form. We'll respond as soon as we can.

[Online enquiry form](#)

If you still need help, phone us on **0800 803 909** (Monday to Friday, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm). If you haven't checked the website first, we'll direct you to it.

Write to us at **PO Box 10 094, Wellington 6143**

Please note, visits are by appointment only.

Make a privacy complaint

If you have an existing complaint, email investigations@privacy.org.nz.

If you want to submit a complaint:

[Lodge your complaint online](#)

[Other ways to complain](#)

Media enquiries

If you have a media enquiry, email media@privacy.org.nz.

Official Information Act (OIA) requests

If you wish to make an official information request, please email oia@privacy.org.nz.

Information for people with disabilities

We aim to ensure people we engage with are treated fairly, whatever their background or circumstances. We will endeavour to accommodate any disabilities you may have to the best of our ability in accordance with the [Human Rights Act 1993](#).

If you have a preferred communication method, please contact us at enquiries@privacy.org.nz or call **0800 803 909** (Monday to Friday, 10am to 3pm) and let us know what we can do to help.

Report a security issue on our website

Use our encrypted enquiries form for assured confidentiality:

[Online enquiry form](#)

Privacy News

[Click here](#) to subscribe to our Newsletter "Privacy News".

NZBN

Office of the Privacy Commissioner's [NZBN](#) is 9429041913161.